1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[596] because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

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554 (2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by
●[633] sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in treding goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

632 little changed. Modern developments are merely super-
[178] imposed on this pattern, mostly due to recent decrees
633 of the central government at Addis Ababa. This city had itself grown out of a modest village on top of Entoto mountain in the 1880's, when Menelik II transferred it to the hilly floodplain just below because the population flocking to his court soon after his early military victories had caused a severe fuel and water shortage on the hilltop. The fondness of the empress for the hot volcanic springs at the somewhat lower water table were another reason for the transfer.

The old title of "kantiba", mayor, was given only to those of most important urban centers, notably Addis Ababa and Gondar, and this traditinn has also been maintained. Although the mayors are now supervised by a young, modern-educated "Director of Municipalities" located in the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa, who may visit them or call them in for conferences and instructions, the appointment to "kantiba" is still made directly by the emperor.

[625] The urban chief of police is still called "shalaqa after the former title of the chief of bodyguard, and his subordinate officers are called "shambal", the title used by Emperor Menelik II for the chief of his most select bodyguard("zebana") of 300 men.

The kantiba can convene a traditional council of elders, called "chilot" (now often referred to as "commissions", after the Italian occupation), which includes the chief of police and top judges, to hear and discuss

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 such modern problems as : increase in the number of hours of daily electricity; extension of city boundaries to include many scattered hamlets (e.g. of ethnic artisans) so as to be given to the rural "näch lebash" (thiefcatchers in white) with regard to the latest reawakening of an old family feud (däm mällässä) that threatens bloodshed; to increase municipal tax revenues; what to do about accompanying official visitors, nosy foreigners, visiting dignitaries, etc.; whether to abandon the insect-infested olf prison or try to rebuild it; etc.

[643] Once or twice a year the emperor himself can be expected, with his retinue, requiring careful preparations and bringing much tension in advance to the urban officials. Sometimes he may address the people at large on the old "yähezb addäbabay", which must be marked out and cleared. If the town is also the provincial capital, the emperor can be expected to examine not only that office, but the heads of the sub-provinces, judges, elementary school, the provincial hospital; etc.

633 798 Religious tolerance, decreed by the emperor, now permits such ethnoreligious minorities as the Muslims to reside wherever they please. In the past they were restricted to a section of the town, usually the part between the floodplain and the big market. For example, in the old city of Gondar, this section, locally called 633 "Addis Aläm" (lit. New world) was assigned them. Despite its name, this is the oldest section, and was probably named so over a century ago because it was newer than

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.
[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

583 624 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge, regarded as their provincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 748 In addition to being a center of public announcements, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and
[731] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Aläm" (church of the "Savior of the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 world", i.e. Jesus Christ), indicating the section of the town in which he lives.

C. Appointment to Office and Decision-Making.

566 The feudal social structure led almost invariably to paternalistic attitudes in appointment to office and in decision-making. This attitude continues in remote rural districts as well as in the most modern-appearing state offices in Addis Ababa.

661 644 The feudal lord, having conquered new lands, usually rewarded his most trusted followers with fiefs and connected privileges. For example, the newly-appointed "mälkäña", who may have previously served merely as military orderly to the warlord, as cupbearer and meatcarver, could be appointed to act as liaison officer and administrator of Galla lands, allocating 1/4 of the land to the old Galla "balbat" as "mälkäña" land of their own, and keeping the rest as his own fief. He would continue to make himself useful as tax-collector, foreman on statute-labor for the lord, as general spy for the ear of the Lord, available for any special service at any time. But he had little security of office or of land tenure, both being at the mercy of any caprice of the lord. It was therefore essential for him to spend much time at the court of the feudal lord, bowing and scraping, ever fearful that some competitor, perhaps the former "läfäri" the herald who announced decrees and public inquiries,

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

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imperial power revived, Emperors like Theodore and, later, Menelik, re-established Amhara rule first over the central highland and later over all the Galla lands of the south. The most formidable resistance encountered by Menelik was from the Moslem Galla Sultan of Jimma. From time to time certain Galla districts resented the corrupt or vicious government of individual Amhara officials and revolted; but these revolts were the common phenomenon of a feudal state of society rather than the beginnings of a conscious Galla movement against an alien Amhara rule. In fact in the Galla countries of the south the rule of the Amhara central government has proved more stable than in the north where it had to meet the challenge of powerful Amhara lords. During the dangerous revolt of Ras Gugsa Wolye it was probably the Galla contingents which saved the throne for Haile Selassie. During the campaign of 1941 thousands of Galla guerrillas took the field against the Italians, while the northern leaders, the great Amhara aristocrats, were inclined to wait on the winner.

T 105 A 563 [196]

Gallas are everywhere in Ethiopia and there are probably few Amhara nobles who have not a strong tinge of Galla blood in their veins. Most Amhara have some knowledge of Galla (although many will not own to it), and Galla is popularly supposed to be the "love language" of Ethiopia.

I had little opportunity for investigating the subject, but I do not believe that all Galla-speaking tribes are racially Galla. In the belt of savannah country between the Mussolini Pass and Dessie I met the two sons of a Wallo Galla headman who were a pair of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen. Copper-skinned and lithe, clad in panther pelts and leaning on their spears, they seemed apparitions out of the Bronze Age. These boys were of pure Hamitic type, rather resembling some of the fine-featured Shluh of the Moroccan Atlas. Yet, in Harar, where I had to disband a battalion of Galla Patriots who had come in from the south, I found stocky square-headed men with heavy jowls, with a fair proportion of negroid types. Incidentally they were reported to show excellent form as soldiers. They were mostly Borana and other southern Gallas.

The variety of physical types among the Gallas adds to the mystery of their origin before the sixteenth century. Some tribes have the tradition of having arrived on the east coast of Africa from over the sea, and one theory postulates the coming of the Galla from Madagascar and attempts to correlate their migration with the intrusion of Malay elements into that island. At present the origin of the Gallas remains one of the most interesting problems of African history.

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Harar itself has, since mediaeval times, enjoyed the situation of a city-state. The emirate of Harar was brought within the Ethiopian Empire only by Ras Makonnen, the father of the present Emperor. It has since remained a favourite city of the Imperial family and a stronghold of their interest. On the edge of the Somali and the Galla country and commanding the way down over the lip of the Southern Escarpment into the Awash valley Harar is a meeting place for all the tribes of Ethiopia and the Arabian coast. The old walled city with its narrow crowded streets and occasional mosques and *turbés* has all the characteristics of an Arabian town, as contrasted with the open settlements of huts, gardens, and plantations which pass for towns in

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and, although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wandering among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo, which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo.

175* 648 799 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa.

175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872-89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755-1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness.

175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty.

175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar

175* 633

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur.

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The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīlha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, sometimes three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and livestock are produced in abundance.

TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāsi (Nagāsē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebastē (Sebastyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbiyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwofilos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yostos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The townspeople of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the proximity to water, the protective rings of mountains, and the healthy distance from Galla tribes.

When Fāsil arrived at Gondar, then no more than an insignificant village, he pitched his tent near a large sycamore. This magnificent tree, one of the landmarks of Gondar, became the site of popular celebrations on holidays. Not far from this tree Fāsil decided to construct his castle, the largest and best preserved of the castles of Gondar. Thus began an ambitious program of building, which included the construction of seven churches, a number of bridges over the streams around Gondar, and a large bath, next to which Fāsil placed a three-story pavilion. In the course of the following century Fāsil's successors added many more buildings, including a total of twenty-one additional churches. Of the secular buildings, the castles of Bakāffā and Empress Mantuāb and the "Recreation Hall" of Dāwit III were the most outstanding.

In their political endeavors, Gondar's monarchs began by upholding the Abyssinian tradition of a warrior king. Though unable to secure definitive victories over his enemies, Fāsil was continually joining battle with them. He spent all but five of his thirty-five years of rule on the warpath. The reign of Yohānnes the Pious was marked more by religious than military preoccupations, but warfare on a small scale was carried out during half the years he ruled. Yohānnes' son, Iyāsu the Great, seized the spear with renewed vigor and brought Gondar to the pinnacle of its might. Iyāsu's campaigns carried him to far parts of the empire, some of which were not again to be visited by a triumphant Amhara king until two centuries later.

On Iyāsu's return from one of his famous field tours, Gondar suffered a misfortune that ushered in a long era of political disorganization. Learning that his favorite concubine had died and been buried while he was away, the grief-stricken Iyāsu withdrew to one of the monastic islands of Lake Ṭānā. His son, Takla Hāymānot, took advantage of the situation to have himself proclaimed emperor; and shortly after, probably encouraged by those of the clergy who mistrusted Iyāsu's sympathy for Catholicism, he had his father assassinated on the isle.

The next four emperors had short and brutish reigns. Takla Hāymānot, Tēwoflos, and Yoṣṭos were occupied mainly with the quashing of conspiracy and rebellion. Even so, they had time for the favored sports of hunting wild animals and raiding Galla and Negroid tribes. Dāwit III, it seems, did not even accomplish that. The chief slaughter in his reign was of the local clergy; he brought Muslim Galla to massacre hundreds of the monks and priests of Gondar, for they had opposed his theological views. All four emperors ended ignobly. Takla Hāymānot was stabbed to death; Tēwoflos was probably poisoned; Yoṣṭos, not of the Solomonic line, was forcibly deposed; and Dāwit III was poisoned. Bakāffā was more careful to protect himself from pretend-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

rs than were his predecessors. He spent his days breaking the power of the feudal lords and strengthening the hand of the monarchy, and died a natural death.

Iyāsu II was the last of the Gondar emperors to rule with full power. He, too, had to spend much of his military energy suppressing conspirators. One pretender maintained a long siege of Gondar, and although his troops never succeeded in storming the castle, they destroyed much of the capital. After checking the rebels, Iyāsu II withdrew from the political affairs and became absorbed in private pursuits. Later, stung by the popular ridicule of his inactivity, he launched a major campaign against the Fung kingdom of Senaar. The net result of that venture was eighteen thousand dead and the depletion of his treasury. The subsequent subdual of Lāstā, a rebel region for generations, and Iyāsu's raids against tribes in the Atbārā district were not sufficient to redeem that defeat or restore the force of Gondar.

The political history of Gondar after the assassination of Iyāsu the Great is that of a fairly steady decline. The power of the monarchy was weakened by frequent coups d'état: no fewer than twenty-five emperors were deposed in the century and a half between Iyāsu I and Tēwodros. The power of central government was weakened by the increased strength of the nobles, each pursuing his personal interests. The power of the Abyssinian nation was weakened by the influx of Galla, who entered Gondar as prisoners and mercenary troops and finally, with the marriage of Iyāsu II to the daughter of a Galla chieftain, reached the royal court itself. The succession of emperors after Iyāsu II is largely a list of figureheads, living their brief spells in the dreary pomp into which the court had fallen, while the real power was wielded by independent lords throughout the land.

The history of Gondar, however, is more than a chronicle of military expeditions and political intrigues. It is above all a history of the Amhara's most concentrated attempt to cultivate their religious and aesthetic culture, some aspect of which stimulated most of Gondar's sovereigns.

Fāsil, we have seen, was greatly interested in architecture. In addition to his many constructions in and around Gondar, he rebuilt the old cathedral at Aksum, which had been in ruins since the pillage of Ahmad Grāñ. Fāsil's interest in religion, moreover, extended beyond the building of churches. He sought to promote the integrity of the Ethiopian Church by expelling the Jesuits, and assisted its restoration by fixing rules for the ministration of church services.

Yohānnes the Pious was devoted to the furtherance of religious studies. He built a library to house religious manuscripts, as well as two new churches. Possessed of an unusual decorative bent, he had the walls of the library covered with a yellowish plaster and raised designs in stucco, and he himself painted miniatures on some of the manuscripts. His queen, Sebla Wangel,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings*, a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine*, the last major production in Ge'ez literature.

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history.

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death:

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.[6]

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kiflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dubra Berhān Selassie alone.[6] It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*atmā* ("religious

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[6] Dubra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its definitive organization.

Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769–77), for example, when the actual power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of *aquāquām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century:

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts.

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*.

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere.

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna*, an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables.

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst*.

The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[42]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

flux of many Muslims and Galla, a migration favored by its urban situation. Manz, surrounded by hostile Galla, was forced for survival to cultivate its fighting powers, and for ultimate security to reconquer the surrounding areas. It was aided in this by whatever special geographical and cultural factors helped to produce the peculiarly militant and defiant character of the Manzē. But because of the annihilation of most of Shoa's churches and monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the isolation of Manz from the renascence of Amhara culture at Gondar, it was left illiterate and culturally impoverished. Its religious life remained limited to a narrow adherence to the ritual requirements of Ethiopian Christianity.

The dispersion of the Solomonic line over the several provinces was thus accompanied by the formation of distinct mores for Manz and Gondar. There is evidence that the differences were quite pronounced by the early nineteenth century. Just a few years before the fierce inhabitants of Manz sped to the rescue of Sāhla Selassie against the rebel Matako, Gondar was similarly threatened by a rebel band under a man named Mersu. Compare Rüppell's account of the behavior of the Gondarēs:

> In this general alarm the pitifulness of the local inhabitants was all too conspicuous. Far from uniting to defend their property with arms against the dreaded plunder—which would have been easy, in as much as there were at least four hundred rifles in Gondar, while not a single one of Mersu's men possessed a firearm—instead they carried the rifles into the churches, in order to keep them from being plundered along with the other booty.[48]

The distinction between Manz and Gondar suggested here is drawn in terms of "ideal types"—generalized dispositions which will, of course, not be true in every case and which will be found elsewhere in Ethiopia to a greater or lesser degree. It is interesting to note that in their own stereotypes, Ethiopians tend to view the Manzēs as fighters, the Gondarēs as literati, but not vice versa. Thus, an officer of the Imperial Bodyguard who commanded Ethiopian troops in the Korean War has said:

> The Manzēs were excellent soldiers. They were independent, not so ready to obey commands as the Galla, but they had good ideas about fighting and were very brave in the battlefield. The soldiers from Gondar tended to be independent and insubordinate, too, but they were not very good soldiers, either.*

On the other hand, Ethiopians commonly consider Manz as much a land of the backward as they regard Gondar the home of the learned. Krapf observed

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* This stereotype of the Gondarē is combatted by Garimā Tīfarā's book, *The Gondarē with His Shield* (*Gondarē Be-Gēbdāw* [Addis Ababa: Tafā Gabra Selassie Press, 1957]), which records in great detail the contributions of individual Gondarēs to the fight against the enemy during the Italian occupation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 18 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 197 648 ### *Gondar Today*

A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 [874] [648] [162] After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953 with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college. The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 871 178 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām* and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 771 793 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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THE EMERGING ADOLESCENT

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethiopians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture. The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to